

University of Groningen

## Self-organizing urban transformation and its institutional implications

Zhang, Shuhai

**IMPORTANT NOTE:** You are advised to consult the publisher's version (publisher's PDF) if you wish to cite from it. Please check the document version below.

*Document Version*

Publisher's PDF, also known as Version of record

*Publication date:*

2016

[Link to publication in University of Groningen/UMCG research database](#)

*Citation for published version (APA):*

Zhang, S. (2016). *Self-organizing urban transformation and its institutional implications*. [Thesis fully internal (DIV), University of Groningen]. Rijksuniversiteit Groningen.

### Copyright

Other than for strictly personal use, it is not permitted to download or to forward/distribute the text or part of it without the consent of the author(s) and/or copyright holder(s), unless the work is under an open content license (like Creative Commons).

The publication may also be distributed here under the terms of Article 25fa of the Dutch Copyright Act, indicated by the "Taverne" license. More information can be found on the University of Groningen website: <https://www.rug.nl/library/open-access/self-archiving-pure/taverne-amendment>.

### Take-down policy

If you believe that this document breaches copyright please contact us providing details, and we will remove access to the work immediately and investigate your claim.

Downloaded from the University of Groningen/UMCG research database (Pure): <http://www.rug.nl/research/portal>. For technical reasons the number of authors shown on this cover page is limited to 10 maximum.

## Propositions belonging to the PhD thesis

### Self-organizing Urban Transformation and Its Institutional Implications

Shuhai Zhang

1. Chinese and European planning meet each other in the perspective of change, evolution and emergence which reminds planners not just of cultural differences but as well makes them aware of an 'other' urban reality that is in continuous change and is autonomously driven.
2. A self-organized urban transformation is not (pre-) planned or externally organized. It is the spontaneous outcome of unintended collective action which follows from independent individual actions.
3. A self-organized urban transformation follows three main steps: first a symmetry break occurs, beginning as an increase in tension before reaching criticality; second, adjusting actor behaviours occur, responding to the situational changes and; third, new patterns emerge spontaneously.
4. In the process of self-organizing urban transformation, institutional intervention can still have an influential role, albeit not in traditional terms such as top-down control. Instead of direct regulation, institutions actually trigger, constrain and enable the conditions under which actors behave and interact.
5. Government controlled planning, shared governance, self-governance and self-organization are all important representations of mechanisms that contribute in their own particular ways to urban transformation.
6. Face-to-face communication is the best way to engage with others while undertaking research. A smile, a feeling of excitement or even a controversial debate can spontaneously result in fantastic ideas.
7. The failure of predictions about urban development largely rests on the fact that these predictions will themselves change the conditions on the basis of which they were made, leading to a different path of development.
8. Perfection is not attainable in academic research, due to the fact that the more results we produce, the more questions arise.
9. Dreams express our belief in the extraordinary, but only actions can realize these dreams if not they vanish and become illusions.